



City of Seattle

Gregory J. Nickels, Mayor

Department of Design, Construction and Land Use

D. M. Sugimura, Director

**CITY OF SEATTLE
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR OF
THE DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND LAND USE**

Application Number: 2207707

Applicant Name: James Cary

Address of Proposal: 4721 Rainier Ave South

SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION

Master Use Permit for future expansion of an existing public library (Columbia Branch Seattle Public Library) for a total of 12,420 square feet in size. Project includes surface parking for 17 vehicles and grading of 675 cubic yards.

The following approvals are required:

Administrative Conditional Use - To expand an existing institution in a multifamily zone.
(Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 23.44.022)

SEPA - Environmental Determination (Seattle Municipal Code Chapter 25.05)

SEPA DETERMINATION: ☐ Exempt ☐ DNS ☐ MDNS ☐ EIS

☒ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolition, or
involving another agency with jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND DATA

Site and Vicinity Description

The Columbia branch Seattle public library is located in the Columbia City Neighborhood and Historic district of Seattle just south of the intersection of Rainier Avenue South and S Alaska Street. The library sits on the southeast portion of Columbia Park which is owned and operated by the Department of Parks and Recreation. The Park contains approximately 113,695 square feet of land bordered on three sides by streets, S Alaska St., Rainier Ave South, and Edmund St, and the fourth side by one block of single family homes. The park and adjacent single family homes are zoned Lowrise 2 (L2). Currently the property contains a two story public library branch constructed in 1914.

Development in the surrounding area consists of a variety of small business south along Rainier Ave So., single family and multifamily development to the west of the park, and north along Rainier Ave So is a funeral home and the Rainier Community Center.

Proposal Description

The applicants propose to expand the existing library by adding a two story addition to the west side of the existing structure. The addition would add 7, 705 square feet bringing the total library square footage up to 12,420 square feet. The proposal includes the addition of three parking spaces to the existing library parking lot.

Public Comment

Three comment letters were received during the official public comment period, which ended January 29, 2003. All three citizens who wrote in their comments raised concerns about the construction noise and expressed a desire the not have any existing trees cut down to make way for the addition.

ANALYSIS - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE (SMC 23.45.116)

The Land Use Code allows the expansion of existing institutions into residential zones through the administrative conditional use process. This proposal is subject to the development standards outlined in section 23.45.116 of the Seattle Municipal Code (SMC). The director's decision has the authority to approve, condition or deny a conditional use application. This decision shall be based on the whether the proposed expansion will be materially detrimental to the public welfare or injurious to property. The applicable criteria used for evaluating and or conditioning the applicant's proposal are discussed below.

A. Bulk and Siting

In order to accommodate the special needs of the proposed institution, and to better site the facility with respect to its surroundings, the Director may modify the applicable development standards for modulation, landscaping, provision of open space, and structure width, depth and setbacks.

According to the plans submitted with the application, the proposal meets the applicable development standards for structure width, depth, modulation, landscaping and setbacks.

B. Dispersion

An institution which does not meet the dispersion criteria of Section 23.45.102 may be permitted by the Director upon determination that it would not substantially aggravate parking shortages, traffic safety hazards, and noise in the surrounding residential area.

The dispersion criteria of section 23.45.102 states that the lot line of any new or expanding institution shall be six hundred feet or more from any lot line of another institution on a residentially zoned property. At this location the southern most property line of Columbia Park is approximately 50' from Orca Elementary School. The Columbia Branch library due to its location within the park is approximately 500' from the school. The Parking Impact Analysis showed that the addition would create an increased demand for on street parking spaces during the peak library times of 6:00 to 7:00 pm. However, due to the quantity of on street parking spaces available, this increase was not deemed substantial.

C. Noise

The Director may condition the permit in order to mitigate potential noise problems.
The Columbia Library abuts Rainier Avenue South which is a main arterial through the City of Seattle. The library is also in the flight path for both the SeaTac and Renton airports. Seattle Public Library programming and activities are conducted primarily indoors. Consequently any noise which would result from the expansion would not be greater than that which is already present.

D. Transportation Plan

A transportation plan shall be required for proposed new institutions and for those institutions proposing expansions which are larger than four thousand (4,000) square feet of structure area and/or required to provide twenty (20) or more parking spaces.

The proposed expansion required a transportation plan and a trip generation calculation because the addition was greater than 4,000 square feet and required more than 20 spaces. As a result of the information presented by the applicants Parking Impact Analysis the parking lot was expanded to encompass three additional parking spaces and the driveway and curb cut were revised to enhance pedestrian and vehicular safety.

A waiver to reduce the quantity of required parking from 35 to 17 was requested by the applicant. The development standards of section 23.45.122.D2d allow the amount of required parking to be reduced if the applicant can demonstrate that less parking is required due to unusual features of the institution or the activities and programs offered. In their waiver request that applicants noted that library expansion is limited within the park by jurisdictional boundary set forth between the Parks Department and Library that pre-dates this expansion request. Adding additional parking Along Rainier Avenue is prohibited by the development standards for institutions which do not allow parking within a front setback. In order to place parking along

the north side of the existing library structure the applicant would have to remove a number of healthy large cedar trees which many neighbors and community members have voiced their support in retaining. The previously mentioned site constraints combined with the availability of on street parking in the vicinity justify a waiver to reduce the quantity of required parking from 35 to 17.

DECISION - ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONAL USE

The conditional use application is **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS** as indicated at the end of this document.

ANALYSIS - SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the annotated environmental checklist dated December 18, 2002 and supplemental information in the project file. This information, along with the experience of the lead agency in similar situations, forms the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665.D) states "where City regulations have been adopted to address an environmental impact, it shall be presumed that such regulations are adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation," subject to limitations. Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Storm Water, Grading and Drainage Control Ordinance (grading, site excavation and soil erosion); Street Use Ordinance (watering streets to suppress dust, obstruction of the pedestrian right-of-way during construction, construction along the street right-of-way, and sidewalk repair); and Building Code (construction standards). Compliance with these codes and ordinances will be adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of identified adverse impacts. The Policies also discuss in SMC 23.05.665 D1-7, that in certain circumstances it may be appropriate to deny or mitigate a project based on adverse environmental impacts. This may be specified otherwise in the policies for specific elements of the environment found in SMC 25.05.675. In consideration of these policies, a more detailed discussion of some of the potential impacts is appropriate.

Short-Term Impacts

The following temporary or construction-related impacts are expected: potential soil erosion during grading, excavation and general site work; increased run-off; tracking of mud onto adjacent streets by construction vehicles; increased demand on traffic and parking from construction equipment and personnel; conflict with normal pedestrian movement adjacent to the site; increased noise; and consumption of renewable and non-renewable resources. Due to the temporary nature and limited scope of these impacts, they are not considered significant (SMC Section 25.05.794). Although not significant, these impacts are adverse.

Noise

Construction noise may be adverse enough to warrant mitigation. The proximity of residential uses is such that the limitations of the Noise Ordinance would be inadequate to mitigate potential

noise impacts. Pursuant to SEPA policies in SMC Section 25.05.675.B, the hours of construction, including excavation, foundation installation activities shall be limited to between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on non-holiday weekdays and between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Some extra-ordinary activities may require occasional Sunday and evening work. If such work is planned, a request should be submitted in writing to the DCLU Planner (Glenda Warmoth 206-684-0966) and should be requested prior to each occurrence.

Long-Term Impacts

Long-term or use-related impacts are also anticipated as a result of approval of this proposal including: increased bulk and scale on the site; increased traffic in the area and increased demand for parking; increased demand for public services and utilities; and increased light and glare; increased energy demand; increased noise associated with increased human activity and vehicular movement.

Several adopted City codes and/or ordinances provide mitigation for some of the identified impacts. Specifically these are: the Stormwater, Grading and Drainage Control Code which requires on site detention of stormwater with provisions for controlled tightline release to an approved outlet and may require additional design elements to prevent isolated flooding; the City Energy Code which will require insulation for outside walls and energy efficient windows; the Seattle Building Code which provides prescriptive construction techniques and standards; and the Land Use Code which controls site coverage, setbacks, building height and use and contains other development and use regulations to assure compatible development. Compliance with these applicable codes and ordinances is adequate to achieve sufficient mitigation of most long term long term impacts, although some impacts warrant further discussion and possible mitigation.

Traffic and Parking

The trip generation for the proposed project was determined using rates published in the Trip Generation Manual (Institute of Transportation Engineers, 6th Edition, 1997) for libraries (land use code 590). It was determined that the proposed project would generate approximately 228 automobile trips per day and 30 trips during the PM peak hour. Trips generated from the current 6,800 square foot library, is 370 daily trips and 48 PM peak hour trips. Rainier Avenue South has a current traffic volume greater than 26,000 vehicles per day. At this location there are approximately 2,200 PM peak trips. The proposed of increase of 228 automobile trips per day is an estimated 1% increase to traffic volumes along this portion of Rainier Ave South. It is unlikely that a 1% increase will result in adverse impact necessitating mitigation.

Historic Preservation

As a landmark structure in a designated Historic District of the City of Seattle the Department of Neighborhoods-Landmark Preservation Office is reviewing the applicants' proposal for development simultaneously. Their final determination will occur once the SEPA/ACU review is complete.

DECISION - SEPA

This decision was made after review by the responsible official on behalf of the lead agency of a completed environmental checklist and other information on file with the responsible department. This constitutes the Threshold Determination and form. The intent of this declaration is to satisfy the requirement of the State Environmental Policy Act (RCW 43.21.C), including the requirement to inform the public of agency decisions pursuant to SEPA.

The SEPA application is **APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS** as indicated at the end of this document.

CONDITIONS - ACU

1. Prior to issuance of the of the construction permit the Columbia Library must submit an agreement to DCLU which outlines how the institution will encourage alternative modes of transportation by its participants. This plan must meet the requirements of section 23.45.122.D3d and be approved by DCLU planner, Glenda Warmoth or her successor.

CONDITIONS - SEPA

During Construction

The following condition to be enforced during construction shall be posted at the site in a location on the property line that is visible and accessible to the public and to construction personnel from the street right-of-way. The conditions will be affixed to placards prepared by DCLU. The placards will be issued along with the building permit set of plans. The placards shall be laminated with clear plastic or other weatherproofing material and shall remain in place for the duration of construction.

1. Pursuant to SEPA policies in SMC Section 25.05.675.B, the hours of construction, including excavation, foundation installation and framing activity shall be limited to between 7:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on non-holiday weekdays and between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. on Saturdays. Some extra-ordinary activities may require occasional Sunday and evening work. If such work is planned, a request should be submitted in writing to the DCLU Planner (Glenda Warmoth 206-684-0966) and should be requested prior to each occurrence.

Signature: _____ (signature on file) Date: April 17, 2003
Glenda Warmoth, Land Use Planner
Department of Design, Construction and Land Use
Land Use Services

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